

619 To the south of Tay is the Jubur tribe. This tribe is composed
241 of two branches, the Jubur of Jagjag concentrated around Tal Brak
233 and south to Hassakeh, and the Jubur of the Khabur from north of
Hassakeh to Fadghami. The Jagjag Jubur have taken to growing
cereals besides grazing, but the Khabur Jubur find little employ-
ment in agriculture because their area is arid and those who do not
work on irrigated lands are mostly sheep grazers.

619 Another big tribe migrating between the Euphrates and Jazirah
241 is the Baggaret el Jabal. This tribe is completely nomad. It spends
233 the winter in the plains toward Deir Ezzor and migrates in the sum-
721 mer to Jabal Abdel Aziz. It used to cross the Khabur to graze in
Jazirah but a dispute arose with Shammar Ezzor in 1949 over the
ownership of some villages below Derbaniya, and supported by
the Kurds, Shammar was able to drive Baggara back across the
Khabur.

221 Of these tribes mentioned, Shammar is still mostly nomadic
621 though its lands in the north are good for agriculture. The Tay
tribe is completely sedentary, Jubur Jagjag have become mostly
sedentary, while Jubur Khabur are in a measure nomads because of
the unsuitability of their lands, and the Baggara are completely
nomads.

619 In tribal politics, Shammar stands alone. Tay and the Jubur
721 are traditional allies against Shammar. The Baggara are enemies
of Shammar and friendly to Jubur. Raids of Shammar on Jubur are
frequent especially in the region of Fadghami. The last big con-
flict between Shammar and Tay occurred in 1951 when over a
hundred persons from the two parties were killed in a fight over the
ownership of the lands south of the Rad.

622 The Bedouin Sheiks of the different Arab tribes formerly re-
621 ceived money grants from the Ottoman Government under the
guise of expenses for the maintenance of law and order in their
regions. These grants were in essence bribes to keep the Sheiks
quiet. Unfortunately, the French continued this system, and relied
on the Sheiks to control the tribesmen by giving the Sheik a fixed
annual salary, each according to his importance. In this way, the
Government implicitly renounced its right to deal directly with
the individual Bedouin and dealt with him only through his Sheik.

This situation, which lasted until about a year ago, strengthened
the Sheik enormously in the eyes of his tribesmen, and the Sheik
622 invariably exploited the situation to his personal benefit. Thus,
425 in the Bedouin districts of Jazirah, the rapid development and
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prosperity of the region during the last twelve years resulted in the benefit of the Sheiks who were quick to seize the meaning of the expansion in agriculture brought about by the introduction of the machines. They laid claim to vast areas of the best lands without opposition or control by the Government, and then rented these lands to machine owners, thereby getting rich at the expense of others and depriving the tribesmen of the possibility of tilling their own lands.

The concentration of land in the hands of the Sheik and his family is greatest in the Shammar tribe and in the Jubur whether though the Chiefs of the tribe own the best lands, but the Tay tribesmen took to agriculture earlier than either the Shammar or the Jubur and many Tay villages are owned by the peasants.

This short glimpse covers the Arab population of Jazirah, and we turn now to the other elements in the population.

II. The Kurds

The Kurds have been and are a vital element in the development of Jazirah. Their original country is the mountains north of the plain. Their language and customs have dominated the country so that even the city dwellers of Mardin and Nisibin speak Kurdish besides Arabic and Turkish. The Kurdish migration to Jazirah started in earnest after the failure of the Kurdish rebellion against the reforms of Mustafa Kamal. Some Kurdish tribal chiefs sentenced to death migrated with their tribes to Syria. The French authorities welcomed them and they occupied the lands directly south of the border, greatly increasing in this way the number of Kurds already in the region. The Arab tribes saw their lands diminishing, but not being yet land conscious, they were satisfied to claim tribute from the Kurdish villages, which was paid for several years.

For the first time in perhaps nine hundred years, the French established law and order in Jazirah. The Kurds, farmers in their own country, began cultivating the plains. The land being fertile, the crops were good. The French authorities treated the Kurds well and the news of good crops and unbiased government treatment reached the Kurds just across the border. Migration became a continuous operation from the mountains to the villages of the plain. There were no obstacles to this movement either on the Turkish or the Syrian side, and the immigrants joined their cousins and relatives across the railway line. For this reason, and because a census was never taken, it is very difficult to estimate the number of Kurds in the Jazirah.

562 But proofs of their increase are the hundreds of new villages tilled
361 by Kurds and built by them in the regions of Kubur el Bid, Amuda,
and Derbassiya.

621 The Kurds like the Arabs, follow a tribal organization. Starting
221 from the east, the Koshar tribe, mostly nomadic but recently turning
619 to agriculture, dominates Jazirat ibn Amr, i.e., the region of
721 Deink and Ain Diwar. The Koshar border Shammar on the south and
they are on fighting terms because Nayefz Pasha, chief of the Koshar,
killed the brother of Dham, chief of Shammar. Next to the west is
the Shitiya tribe around Kubur el Bid. This tribe is old in the region.

[291] Its members are Arab in their dress and, in contrast with all the other
191] Kurdish tribes, they speak Arabic as well as Kurdish. Its lands lie
west of Shammar and more within the Tay region but its relations
with both are friendly.

619 Qamishli, which is a Tay region, includes villages of the Pinar
361 Ali tribe. But west of Qamishli comes a solid bloc of 100% Kurdish
villages extending for more than sixty kilometers and reaching to
the west of Dirbassiya practically uninterrupted by any Arab village.
[134] This area is undoubtedly one of the most fertile of Jazirah. Within
it, the Dakkuriya tribe is centered around Amuda, then follow the
Kikiya around Dirbassiya, and the Milliya from Dirbassiya to Ras el
Ain.

463 The Kurds are considered very good farmers. They plow and
241 plant with mules but they rent combines for the harvest. This is
577 because they have learned that combine harvest is more economic-
511 al. The Kurd is also greatly praised for his character. He is truth-
ful, honest, and upright in his dealings. He keeps his word and the
merchants of the Jazir trust him completely. He is also clean in
his home and in his dress, and though Bedouins reproach him for not
being generous in his house, his standard of living is higher than the
Bedouin and his villages are much cleaner.

622 The Kurds owe allegiance to their Agha who takes the place of
423 the Bedouin Sheik. But this relationship is weaker than is the case
of the Bedouins. The successive Governments did not give the Agha
grants of money or similar authority over his tribesmen in the man-
ner of the Sheik. The Kurds were considered from the start seden-
tary people subject directly to Government laws. That is why most
of the Kurds own and till their lands in their own right.